Local Food Plus (LFP) is a non-profit organization that brings farmers and consumers to the table to share in the benefits of environmentally and socially responsible food production. We are committed to building and fostering local sustainable food systems by certifying farmers and processors and linking them with local purchasers. We are a national organization. However, the current focus of our work is Ontario, and in particular the Greenbelt around the Greater Toronto area and Niagara.

As a critical link in every food system, farmers have much to gain through LFP certification. With LFP certification, you can add value by differentiating your products in the local marketplace. If you’re a conventional producer who uses sustainable practices, you can certify LFP to differentiate yourself from other conventional products and to receive credit in the marketplace for your social and ecological practices. If you’re an organic producer, you can certify LFP to differentiate yourself from imported and industrial organic products.

Once you’re LFP certified, we can help you revolutionize your current business strategy by giving you access to new markets, including colleges and universities, public and private schools, municipalities, hospitals, corporate cafeterias, daycares, retailers, and restaurants. We open doors and facilitate meetings with local processors, distributors, and institutional purchasers while giving you the freedom to negotiate deals that work best for your business. You can reduce the risk by working with institutional buyers to create stable and predictable markets.

We also offer a full range of marketing and educational support, including the licensed use of the LFP certification logo and listings in local food directories.

Show local purchasers that you have gone the distance by certifying Local Food Plus.

For further information on our farmer standards and certification, please contact:
Amber Gulbis – Producer Services Coordinator for Niagara 905.246.3063
Don Mill – Director of Producer Services 416.699.6070 ex. 224
I hate to see bare soil, particularly during the growing season. It seems like a missed opportunity to build a better soil for the future. Pulling out trees and vines and renovating the field offers a real chance to build the productive capacity of your soil for the future. Cover crops can:

- Add active organic matter – both the above ground residue and the roots from a cover crop contribute to the organic matter levels of soil. The living root systems also exude exudates that contribute to soil structure, increase soil moisture capacity, improve drainage and provide food for a diverse soil life.
- Cover the soil to reduce erosion potential and suppress weed growth and seed set
- Provide a break in pest cycles by introducing a different species or non-host plant. Choose the right cover crops and keep the area weed free to reduce nematode numbers
- Nutrient scavenging – or cycling. Cover crops can capture remaining nutrients from the main crop and release in the next cropping year.

### Cover Crop Options

Let’s take stock – what do we want to achieve with the cover crop? Build organic matter? Reduce nematode numbers? Or just cover the soil as cheaply as possible?

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<th>Goal</th>
<th>Conditions and Cover Crop Options</th>
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| Build organic matter  
- assuming 1 season for cover crop | Early to mid summer  
Sorghum sudan – will need mowing, encourages deeper root growth  
Late summer to early fall  
- Oats  
- Mixtures of cereal grasses and legumes  
- Oilseed radish with oats or rye |
| Reduce or suppress nematodes | Mustard var. Cutlass or other “hot” mustard – plan for multiple planting, green foliage needs to be worked into soil  
Sorghums - Sordan 79, Trudan 8 |
| Cover soil to prevent erosion | Summer – rye, wheat  
Late summer – barley, oats |

### Getting Cover Crops Started

The key to getting the most benefit out of a cover crop is to grow as much biomass (top and roots) as possible, control weeds and ensure an even stand. To do this:

- select a cover crop that makes sense for the growing season available, oats in October usually are usually not going to grow enough to make it worth the effort – switch to wheat or rye while sorghum sudan makes sense in late June and through early August but not once the calendar says September
- be aware of the fertility needs of the cover crop, species like oilseed radish and sorghum are good nitrogen scavengers but this also means that there needs to be some nitrogen available for the best cover crop growth
- plant as soon as possible and practical
- use a drill to plant seed whenever possible, you will get better seed placement both in soil moisture and seed distribution
- herbicide residues may reduce the stand or evenness of your cover crop

### Cover Crop Seed Sources

Common cover crop species like rye, oats and wheat can usually be sourced through your local agricultural supplier. Less common species like oilseed radish may require a bit more research to find a supplier. The OMAFRA website features a cover crop seed supplier listing ([http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/resource/covercrp.htm](http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/resource/covercrp.htm)). You can search either by supplier or by cover crop species. Farm publications also often have advertisements for cover crop seed. Take care when buying cover crop seed. Cheap seed isn’t a bargain if it has low germination or introduces weeds. Buy good quality seed.

A last note, some Conservation Authorities and the last Environmental Farm Plan provided at least some funding to offset the cost of cover crop seed in the past – take a look in your area to see what may be offered to help you in your cover crop venture!
Grape and tree fruit growers may be planning to remove plantings, and need to consider the risk of carryover herbicides that may harm subsequent crops. Of particular interest are these commonly used herbicides:

- simazine (Princep, Simadex, Simazine)
- diuron (Karmex, Diurex)
- terbacil (Sinbar)
- diclofenop (Casoron)
- napropamide (Devrinol) (mostly of concern for cover or cereal crops)
- clopyralid (Lontrel) (mostly of concern for vegetables and soybeans)

Most other soil applied herbicides (Dual II Magnum, Treflan, Frontier, Sencor, Lorox, Kerb) would likely be degraded in a year, when applied at labeled rates.

Here are some general factors that affect the amount of residue:

- rate applied – lower rates cause less problems
- length of time since application – best to avoid applications in the year of removal, although some products may persist for several years.
- soil pH – prefer 6.0 to 7.2 to promote herbicide degradation
- soil organic matter – higher OM encourages microbial activity and breakdown
- soil moisture – more herbicide degradation with good moisture, but saturated soil may also reduce activity
- soil management after removal (see tips below)

If you suspect your site may have herbicide residue problems, a chemical analysis may indicate if problems are present. However, the test is specific for each herbicide, and may be expensive. Contact the Pest Diagnostic Clinic

www.labservices.uoguelph.ca/units/pdc/ about test availability and prices.

A greenhouse bioassay may give some helpful information, although the results may be difficult to interpret. Sample soil where the herbicide was applied eg. under trees/vines and/or where overlap may have occurred. Include a sample of soil with no known herbicide residues fro comparison. Grow at least 4 test crops – tomatoes, cucumbers, oats, lettuce or sugar beets may be sensitive. Allow at least 4-6 weeks for complete results. If injury is present, future cropping may be affected. However, this is not a guarantee that no problems result in future crops.

A few cultural tips to reduce problems with herbicide residues:

- Plowing may dilute the residue through a greater volume of soil – although avoid creating a zone of concentrated herbicide where future roots grow. Adjust the plough for a good shear with mixing action.
- Adjust soil pH to a more neutral level (pH of 6.0 to 7.2 is preferred).
- Improve organic matter by cover crops, mulch, manure, etc.
- Avoid application of any long-residual herbicides at least one, and preferably 2 years before removal of planting if possible.
- Note the location of tree/vine rows to avoid in future plantings. If possible, changing row alignment (eg. N-S to E-W) may be helpful although sunlight interception needs to be considered.
- Avoid high value crops in the year after removing. Cover crops may also be injured but can be beneficial in renovating old orchard/vineyard sites.

New Peach Book Coming Soon

This book brings together the collective effort of world authorities (49 in total) from eight countries to provide the single most complete source of information on peaches. Twenty-two chapters summarize the state-of-the-art and provide historical perspective relevant to this vital world fruit crop. There are nearly 300 color photographs and more than 43 tables present in the 850-page volume.

A unique feature of the book is the chapter on China. For the first time in the English language, the history of cultivation and production trends in China is presented with quotations from historical references dating back to 1100 B.C.

The Peach will be available at a 30% discount off the retail price to readers of the The Tender Fruit Grapevine newsletter for orders placed until September 30, 2008. The discounted price will be $196 (Cdn) and orders can be placed on-line from orders@cabi.org; or from the website (www.cabi.org); or by phoning +44 (0)1491 829 400; fax +44 (0)1491 829292. Be sure to use the promotional code "XAD" when placing your order in order to receive this special discount.